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ABSTRACT

This language arts minicourse guide for Lampeter-Strasburg (Pennsylvania) High School contains a topical outline of a course on literature for the adolescent years. The guide includes a list of thirteen course objectives; an outline of the motifs to be studied in two novels characteristic of adolescent literature; a description of the course content and concepts to be studied in various works of literature for the adolescent; the presentation of ten student activities to be completed in the classroom; and suggestions for instructional materials, including sound filmstrips, posters, and books. The guide concludes with a list of novels for additional reading. (RB)

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Language Arts Mini-Course

LITERATURE OF THE ADOLESCENT YEARS

Lampeter-Strasburg High School
Lampeter, Pennsylvania

1973

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CS 202 028

LITERATURE OF THE ADOLESCENT YEARS

OBJECTIVES:

1. To recognize eight facts pertaining to the life of J. D. Salinger.
2. To recognize six facts pertaining to the life of Harper Lee.
3. To reconstruct plot in two novels.
4. To identify, by description, eighteen characters in The Catcher in the Rye.
5. To identify, by description, twenty-six characters in To Kill A Mockingbird.
6. To explain two symbols in The Catcher in the Rye.
7. To name two motifs in The Catcher in the Rye.
8. To list four elements of style used by Harper Lee in To Kill A Mockingbird.
9. To name three motifs in To Kill A Mockingbird.
10. To identify theme in The Catcher in the Rye and To Kill A Mockingbird.
11. To debate the use of profanity by J. D. Salinger in The Catcher in the Rye.
12. To analyze problems of adolescence through examination of 22 poems.
13. To create an artistic endeavor representing the individual identity of the student.

OUTLINE:

I. NOVELS

A. The Catcher in the Rye

1. Background on J. D. Salinger
2. Characters in novel
3. Symbolism

a. Holden's red hat
b. Allie, Holden's dead brother

4. Motifs

a. Death wish
b. "phonies"

5. Theme of alienation, loneliness
6. Controversy over Holden's use of profanity in the novel

B. To Kill A Mockingbird

1. Background on Harper Lee
2. Characters
3. Style
   a. Local color
   b. Child's vocabulary
   c. Atmosphere
   d. Humor
4. Motifs
   a. Mockingbird
   b. Mad dog
   c. Learning experience
5. Theme of destructive power of prejudice and hatred

II. POETRY

A. From The Search for Self

1. "The Young Ones, Flip Side"
2. "Thumbprint"
3. "Hope"
4. "I Like..."
5. "True to a Dream"
6. "The Fact"
7. "Fairy Tale"
8. "Child On Top of a Greenhouse"
9. "The Explorer"
10. "Young Woman on Her Own"
11. "Note From Body to Soul"
12. "After Halloween Slump"
13. "Water Birds"
14. "Upstairs"
15. "Duck-chasing"
16. "Directions to the Armorer"
17. "Will I Remember?"
18. "Postscript"

19. "The Dreamer"

20. "I Knew"

21. "The Tree is Father to the Man"

22. "Learn to Be Water"

III. SHORT STORIES (optional)

A. From The Search for Self

1. "The Reservoir"

2. "My Childhood"

3. "Salvation"

4. "Claudine's Book"

5. "Out of Order"

6. "A Precocious Autobiography" (parts)

7. "The Language of Men"

CONTENT:

I. NOVELS

A. The Catcher in the Rye

1. Background on J. D. Salinger

a. Born in New York City, 1919
b. Educated in public schools in N.Y. and Valley Forge Military Academy
c. Attended New York University briefly
d. Drafted in Army, 1942
e. Returned to New York, spent most time in Greenwich Village
f. Began a series of withdrawals from society, but remained friendly with teenagers of the towns
g. Since marriage, 1955, has withdrawn even more from society
h. The Catcher in the Rye, published in 1951, was his first novel.

2. Characters in Novel

   a Caulfield family

      1. Holden, the narrator
      2. Phoebe, Holden's sister, 10 years old
      3. Allie, Holden's brother, died of leukemia, 2 years younger than Holden
      4. D. B., Holden's elder brother, a poet, now living and working in Hollywood
      5. Holden's parents

   b Teachers

      1. Miss Aigletinger, Holden's grade school teacher
      2. Mr. Antolini and his wife, English teacher at Elkton Hills
      3. Mr. Spencer and his wife, history teacher at Pencey Prep
      4. Mr. Vinson, oral expression teacher at Pencey Prep

   c School friends

      1. Robert Ackley, student at Pencey Prep
      2. Ward Stradlater, Holden's roommate at Pency Prep
      3. Mal Brossard, student at Pencey
      4. Jane Gallagher, old girl friend
      5. Sally Hayes, girl with whom Holden has a date
      6. James Castle, student at Elkton Hills who committed suicide
      7. Ely, Ackley's roommate
      8. Lillian Simmons, a girl previously dated by D.B.
      9. George something, Andover student, friend of Sally Hayes
      10. Carl Luce, student at Whooten
      11. Various other students, other persons mentioned, very minor characters

3. Symbolism

   a Holden's red hat
   b Allie, Holden's dead brother

4. Motifs

   a Death wish - a seeking after destruction

      1. The death of James Castle
      2. Phoebe's expression, "Daddy'll kill you."
      3. Holden's daydreams of having a bullet in his guts, of dying of cancer
      4. Holden's concern for ducks in Central Park during winter

b. "Phonies"

1. Holden's moral system and sense of justice force him to detect horrifying flaws in society; all these flaws are summed up in the word "phony"

5. Theme of alienation, loneliness

a. Holden is a victim of society, an inevitable force which crushes and destroys him.
b. Holden is seeking to become involved with people and life without the inevitable pain and disillusionment that seems to come with involvement.
c. Holden encounters dangers which are created out of contemporary culture--loss of individuality, of accepted values.

6. Controversy

a. Criticism has resulted from Salinger's use of profanity in the text.
b. Book was banned in some communities and condemned by some school boards.

B. To Kill A Mockingbird

1. Background on Harper Lee

a. Born in Monroeville, Alabama, 1926
b. Educated in public schools
c. Attended Huntington College, later University of Alabama, where she studied law
d. Began writing seriously when she met a literary agent in New York.
e. To Kill A Mockingbird, published in 1960, was her first novel.
f. Awarded Pulitzer Prize in 1960

2. Characters

a. Finch family unit

1. Atticus, a lawyer in a small southern town who defends a Negro man
2. Scout, Atticus' young daughter who functions as the narrator of the story
3. Jem, her older brother
4. Cal (Calpurnia), the Negro cook who has been responsible for raising the Finch children
5. Aunt Alexandra, very "proper" aunt who comes to care for the children during the difficult time of the Negro trial
6. Uncle Jack, bachelor uncle who visits every Christmas

b. Neighbors

1. Dill, Scout's companion who lives in Mississippi but comes every summer to visit
2. Miss Rachel, Dill's aunt who lives next door to the Finches
3. Miss Maudie, another neighbor who is very open-minded
4. Mrs. Dubose, an old lady who lives down the street and screams at the children as they pass her house
5. Boo Radley, the mysterious neighbor whom the children have never seen
6. Mr. Nathan Radley, stern, distant brother of Boo who seldom speaks

c. Trial personnel

1. Heck Tate, the sheriff, who is also a good friend of the Finches
2. Judge John Taylor, presiding judge at the trial
3. Mr. Gilmer, the prosecuting attorney
4. Tom Robinson, a hard-working young Negro man who is accused of a crime against Mayella Ewell
5. Bob Ewell, the irresponsible, disgraceful father of a brood of children, who receives welfare checks and uses them for alcohol
6. Mayella Ewell, his daughter who accuses Tom Robinson of attacking her

d. Other characters

1. Mr. Walter Cunningham, an upright farmer who refuses to accept charity
2. Reverend Sykes, a Negro minister who takes care of Scout and Jem during the trial
3. Miss Stephanie Crawford, a gossipy neighbor who knows the family history of the entire neighborhood
4. Miss Caroline Fisher, one of Scout's teachers
5. Mrs. Merriweather, a local lady who writes the halloween pageant
6. Dolphus Raymond, a white man who prefers to live with the Negroes
7. Mr. B. B. Underwood, owner of the town's newspaper
8. Mr. Link Deas, Tom Robinson's boss

3. Style

a. Local color

1. Novel is colored with southern colloquialisms.
2. The varying sounds associated with the southern vernacular and speech pattern contributes to the realism of the novel

b. Child's vocabulary

1. Fits sentence structure into the context of a child's world
2. Simple sentences are used and difficult vocabulary avoided
3. Scout is narrating complex social problems in terms which a child could understand

c. Atmosphere

1. Mystery suggested in speaking of the Radley house
2. Frightening episodes occur at night

d. Humor

1. Humorous tone lessens the final horror of the Tom Robinson incident
2. Novel is remembered for its masterful strokes of humor

4. Motifs

a. Mockingbird

1. It would be a sin to kill a mockingbird because it only sings a beautiful song and does not harm anyone
2. Mockingbird idea unifies two plot elements--the Boo Radley mystery and the Tom Robinson trial, as both are harmless members of society, innocent, yet persecuted
3. To kill a mockingbird is equated with performing a deliberately evil and mean act

b. Mad dog

1. A symbol of the prejudice "disease" which threatens the children
2. The dog is shot by Atticus, "the deadest shot in Maycomb County," who hates to use a gun

c. Learning experiences

1. Almost every chapter builds toward a new learning experience for the narrator
2. In the overall view, Scout learns:

a. Justice and injustice through the Tom Robinson trial
b. Prejudice and its effect upon the process of the law and society
c. Courage as manifested in ways other than physical acts
d. Respect for the individuality of the human being

3. On a smaller scale, Scout learns:

   a. Numerous things about various people
   b. Awareness of the difficulty of being a lady, particularly under duress
   c. When to fight and when not to fight

5. Theme of destructive power of prejudice

   a. Emphasize the importance of our learning to respect differences in other people and of overcoming our prejudiced attitudes.

II. POETRY (from The Search for Self)

A. "The Young Ones, Flip Side"

1. How does this poem explain the problems of being a teenager?
2. What is meant in lines 5-9?
3. What do "put off" and "put on" mean?

B. "Thumbprint"

1. What does this poem say about the need for individual identity?
2. What is the thumbprint symbolic of?
3. What pronouns are repeated? Why?

C. "Hope"

1. What is the significance of the title?

D. "I Like..."

1. Is this poem a symbolic complaint about the older generation?

E. "True to A Dream"

1. The poem is about a dream. What brings it on? What is dreamt of? What ends it?
2. Does this sound like a teenager being called away from his room by a parent?

F. "The Fact"

1. Compare this to "Green, Green Grass of Home" (song)
2. Is the speaker fantasizing?

G. "Fairy Tale"

1. What does this mean?
2. Do you ever feel like hoboing your way around the world, or do you need security?

H. "Child On Top of a Greenhouse"

1. Who is speaking in the poem?
2. Without the title, could you figure out what was going on? How?

I. "The Explorer"

1. Who is the he in the poem?
2. What is the setting?
3. What is he looking for? Does he find it?

J. "Young Woman On Her Own"

1. What is the significance of the title?
2. Why has she stayed on?

K. "Note From Body to Soul"

1. What emotion do you feel the poet is expressing here? Why?
2. What causes his anger?

L. "After Halloween Slump"

1. The significance of this poem is not so much in what it says as in how it says it.
2. What words, phrases, or expressions are unique, unusual, or clever?

M. "Water Bird"

1. What yearning does the poet express?
2. Do you identify with him at all?

N. "Upstairs"

1. What is this about?
2. Is there more to the event than what is on the surface?

O. "Duck-chasing"

1. What is the significance of duck-chasing?
2. What other chasing does a person do in life?
3. Why does he call it "a game" -- and imply it can't be won?

P. "Direction to the Armorer"

1. What does this poem tell you about the confusion of youth?
2. Do you feel like this sometimes?

Q. "Will I Remember?"

1. Do you wonder about growing old?
2. Do you think you will change much?

R. "Postscript"

1. Comment. Is this statement true?
2. Could it have been said as well in a longer poem?

S. "The Dreamer"

1. Do you ever feel you are a disappointment to your parents, teachers, friends, God?
2. Can a person really hide from them?

T. "I Knew"

1. Must one see to believe?

U. "The Tree is Father to the Man"

1. What inspiration was the tree to the children from the ghetto?
2. What does the title mean?

V. "Learn To Be Water"

1. Why water? What qualities does it have that young people should imitate?
2. Does the poem ask you to conform to the establishment or be a free spirit?

ACTIVITIES:

1. Create an autobiographical collage depicting major events in your life. The use of words will be limited. Primarily pictures, drawings, and scraps of items will be pasted on matboard. These collages will be placed around the room and discussed or interpreted by the class in an effort to better understand the students as individuals. A prize (paperback book) may be awarded to the designer of the most interesting and creative collage.

2. After reading The Catcher in the Rye, write a theme based on one of the following topics:

a. Holden's attitude toward religion
b. Holden's attitude toward morality
c. The significance of children in the novel
d. The significance of the title
e. How Holden faces his problems--wisely or foolishly?

3. After dividing into teams, debate the pros and cons of Salinger's use of profanity in The Catcher in the Rye.

4. View and discuss the sound filmstrip "Teenage Rebellion: Challenge to Authority" as it relates to Holden Caulfield's rebellion.

5. After reading To Kill a Mockingbird, individuals may role play the characters or dramatize the trial scene from the novel.

6. Write an essay in which you defend or condemn a prejudice you know you possess.

7. Write a letter to a character in one of the novels. The letter should give the character advice on a problem he is having.

8. Write an original poem based on the theme you experienced in one of the novels you read.

9. Describe the following parts which were found in one of the novels you read:

a. The funniest part
b. The most beautiful part
c. The saddest part
d. The most confusing part
e. The most frightening part

10. Discuss problems of being adolescent as they relate to literature. Possible topics for discussion are?

a. Identity
b. Rebellion: challenge to authority
c. Idealism vs reality
d. Establishing values, morals
e. Overcoming learned prejudice
f. Conflicts with parents, brothers, sisters
g. Conflicts with school
h. Conflicts with religion
i. Loneliness vs solitude
j. Popularity, dating, success
k. Peer pressure, need to identify
l. Love; sex
m. Anger
n. Fear of growing old, death
o. Need for fairness in all aspects of living--home, school, government, society in general

MATERIALS:

I. Sound Filmstrips

A. "Redemption in Manhattan - Salinger's Catcher"
B. "Teenage Rebellion: Challenge to Authority"

II. Posters

A. J. D. Salinger
B. The Catcher in the Rye - 5 posters
C. Harper Lee
D. To Kill A Mockingbird - 10 pictures

III. Books

A. Suggested texts:

1. The Catcher in the Rye (Salinger)
2. To Kill A Mockingbird (Lee)
3. The Search for Self (ed. Haupt)

B. Additional readings:

Author:

Arnothy	I am 15 and I Don't Want to Die
Bonham	Durango Street
Bradford	Red Sky at Morning
Cohen	Cool Cos: The Story of Bill Cosby
Collier	Rock Star
Dizenzo	Phoebe
Donovan	I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth the Trip.
Drabble	Thank You All Very Much
Garfield	War Whoops and Battle Cry
Haggard	Nobody Waved Goodbye
Head	Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones
Hentoff	I'm Really Dragged, But Nothing Gets Me Down
Hudson	Flip Wilson Close-Up
Hudson	R. F. K. 1925-1968
Kingman	The Peter Pan Bag
Laing	Ask Me if I Love You Now
Madison	Think Wild!
Marsh	The Young Winston Churchill
McCullers	Member of the Wedding
Neufeld	Lisa, Bright and Dark
Parks	The Learning Tree
Porter	The Battle of the Thousand Slain and other other Stories Selected From Our Indian Heritage
Richard	Pistol
Sandoz	Winter, Thunder and Other Stories
Sherburne	Stranger in the House
Sillitoe	The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner
Swarthout	Bless the Beasts and Children
Trapp	The Story of the Trapp Family Singers
Vergara	Love and Pasta
Westheimer	My Sweet Charlie
Williams(Beryl)	The Great Houdini
Williams(Pat)	The Fastest Funny Car
Wojciechowska	Don't Play Dead Before You Have To
Wojciechowska	Tuned - Out